

# Georgia-Pacific Bucket Brigade Program

*The following article, which was forwarded to the WFCA by Region 6 Board member Mark Thompson (S. King Fire & Rescue), appeared on the WFCA website from December 28, 2007 – March 20, 2008.*

ATLANTA, GA -- Through the Georgia-Pacific Bucket Brigade program, Georgia-Pacific works to thank the selfless members of volunteer fire departments across the country who battle blazes, perform dangerous rescues, deal with hazardous material spills, assist with homeland security needs, provide safety education to children, and so much more--and do it all with aging, failing equipment or without the specialized gear they need. They also do it all without getting paid.

How does Georgia-Pacific Bucket Brigade acknowledge and reward all that volunteers do? By providing \$105,000 in grants to fire departments across the country that are trying to meet their communities' pressing needs for trained and equipped personnel. Over the last two years, the program has provided more than \$200,000 in support nationally, along with donations of hundreds of cases of paper products for department use.

The fact is, demand for volunteer firefighters is up. According to statistics from the National Volunteer Fire Council (NVFC) and the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), volunteers comprise 72 percent of firefighters in the United States (of the total estimated 1,136,650 volunteer and paid firefighters across the country, 823,350 are volunteer). Also, small communities (populations under 10,000) and mid-sized communities (those with populations above 10,000) rely heavily on volunteer firefighters.

But how can these communities with limited resources cope with stark budget realities, where equipment prices for one portable radio and simple items such as nozzles can start at nearly \$500, one set of replacement turnout gear is nearly \$1,400, and the average cost to train and equip a single firefighter is nearly \$27,000? Add on the fact that emergency response vehicles can cost \$80,000 or more and it can leave some communities struggling to keep up.

"It is especially gratifying to see that our grants are helping make communities near Georgia-Pacific facilities safer," said Jim Hannan, chief executive officer and president. "Fire fighting is dangerous and, in the majority of communities across the country, volunteer and small town fire companies are the only emergency units. It means a lot to help these departments."

Nearly 60 departments applied for the grants, with the following final recipients being chosen (listed by department, location and grant amount): **Norwood Rural Volunteer Fire Dept.**, Ft. Gibson, OK, \$20,000 Community Grant; **Porum Landing Fire Protection Association**, Porum, OK, \$20,000 Community Grant; **Warner Volunteer Fire Dept.**, Warner, OK, \$20,000 Community Grant; **North Crossett Fire Dept.**, Crossett, AR, \$20,000; **Clay County Volunteer Fire Dept.**, Fort Gaines, GA, \$10,000;

**Mist-Birkenfeld Rural Fire Dept.**, Mist, OR, \$10,000; **Needham-Land Volunteer Fire Dept.**, Needham, AL, \$10,000; **Coy Volunteer Fire Dept.**, Coy, AL, \$5,000; **Thorsby Fire Dept.**, Thorsby, AL, \$5,000; **Woodruff County Fire Dept.**, Lexington, KY, \$5,000; **Mount Olive-Unit #7, Station 1**, Gillespie, IL, \$5,000; **Frankfort Fire Dept.**, Frankfort, KS, \$5,000; **Winston County Fire Association**, Louisville, MS, \$5,000, **Maynor Creek Fire Station**, Waynesboro, MS, \$5,000.

The Georgia-Pacific Bucket Brigade is a national program that recognizes and supports the contributions of fire departments in communities with Georgia-Pacific facilities. The program supports firefighters in several areas including product and cash donations for programming and equipment, and safety education materials for presentations in local schools.

Applications for the 2008 Georgia-Pacific Bucket Brigade program will be available next spring. Details are available by contacting [gpbucketbrigade@gapac.com](mailto:gpbucketbrigade@gapac.com).